



STATE SENATOR • LIZ BRATER • 18TH DISTRICT

Brater Press Release

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SENATOR LIZ BRATER URGES NO-REASON ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Supports Secretary of State recommendation to eliminate restrictions on absentee voting

LANSING – Sen. Liz Brater (D-Ann Arbor) today welcomed Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land's support for doing away with the current restrictions on obtaining absentee ballots. Currently, only those 60 and older, those out of their community on election day, incarcerated, having religious reasons for not voting on election day, or those needing assistance at the polls are eligible to vote absentee.

"It's extremely important to give access to every single person who wants to cast a vote and I salute the Secretary of State for supporting ongoing efforts to facilitate voter participation," Brater said. "In the last election, voters were discouraged and inconvenienced by long lines at many polling sites. No-reason absentee ballots are an excellent way to reduce delays while encouraging more voters to participate in the democratic process."

Expanded absentee voter rights are not a new issue to the Michigan legislature, with several bills currently stalled in both House and Senate committees. In September, Sen. Brater introduced legislation which would eliminate qualifications for absentee voting. Currently, no-reason absentee balloting has the unanimous support of the Democratic caucus. Sen. Beverly Hammerstrom (R-Temperance) has also introduced legislation to allow no-reason absentee voting.

"Hopefully, with bi-partisan support, this legislation will receive the attention it deserves, and we are willing to meet with Secretary of State Land and Republican lawmakers anytime anywhere to assure its passage during this session," Brater said. "We are pledging our cooperation to assure that every Michigan registered voter is able to cast a vote."

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State Senator Brater represents Senate District 18 which includes the cities of Ann Arbor, Chelsea, and Ypsilanti, the Villages of Barton Hills and Dexter, and the following townships: Ann Arbor, Augusta, Dexter, Freedom, Lima, Lyndon, Northfield, Salem, Scio, Sharon, Superior, Sylvan, Webster and Ypsilanti. She is the minority vice chair of the Natural Resources and Environmental Affairs Committee and the Agriculture, Forestry, and Tourism Committee.